

SB 201

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1919



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR 44,

Contribution from the Bureau of Plant Industry  
(Forage-Crop Investigations).

WM. A. TAYLOR, Chief.

ITALIAN RYE-GRASS (*Lolium multiflorum*).

Few grasses have been more exploited than Italian rye-grass. It is closely related to perennial rye-grass and much resembles it in general appearance. It grows to a height of from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet. In the moist climate of England it has been very popular as a hay plant and is said to yield four to eight cuttings there when watered with liquid manure. The under surface of the long, narrow leaves has a bright, glossy color, which makes it an attractive lawn grass. Italian rye-grass is an annual plant; yet it sometimes lives more than one year, though seldom more than two years.

VALUE.

The chief value of Italian rye-grass is for an annual hay crop, for temporary lawns, and for winter grazing in the South. The seed usually germinates well, and the grass makes a vigorous growth. This is one of the few grasses that will produce a crop of hay the same season it is sown. It is especially useful to produce a turf quickly and often forms a prominent part of lawn mixtures. Italian rye-grass is more drought resistant than perennial rye-grass and has been used to some extent under dry-land conditions, especially in California.

USES.

This grass is used to some extent in the South to produce winter grazing on Bermuda-grass sod. As an annual hay plant it does not yield the quantity that millet or Sudan grass will produce and so is not commonly grown for hay. It is an excellent grass to include in mixtures for both pastures and lawns. The rye-grass will make an early growth and then give way to the slower growing perennials. The increased yield the first season will usually more than pay for the extra expense of seeding. If seeded early in the fall in the South Atlantic States it will produce a crop of hay the following spring in time to allow the seeding of a crop of soy beans or cowpeas on the same land.



## SOIL AND CLIMATE.

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Italian rye-grass will grow under a great variety of soil and climatic conditions. In the East it does best with an abundance of moisture. It is used on the irrigated lands of the West with excellent results. A rich, moist loam is best suited to its culture.

## SEED.

The seed of Italian rye-grass weighs about 24 pounds to the bushel. Most of it is imported from England. The seed usually sells at a reasonable price and generally may be depended upon to be of good quality.

## CULTURE.

A firm subsoil with a fine, mellow seed bed is desirable for seeding. When used on Bermuda-grass sod the old turf should be harrowed, preferably both before and after seeding. Good results are often obtained by seeding with a disk drill, which cuts the turf and covers the seed. When seeded alone it requires from 25 to 30 pounds of seed to the acre to give a full stand. A smaller quantity is sufficient on a well-prepared seed bed if care is taken to give an even seeding. In mixtures with other grasses and clovers, 8 to 10 pounds of seed to the acre will be sufficient.

LYMAN CARRIER,  
*Agronomist.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 31, 1919.



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